ENGLISH 163
American Films of the 1930s
Semester I, 1975-76
Michael Silverman

CLASSES

There will be one lecture each week, on Thursdays in L hour at Carmichael Auditorium. Lectures will consist basically of three things: (1) discussion of a particular problem in American film history, with special relevance for the films of the 30s; (2) discussion of the work of particular directors, actors, studios, etc.; (3) examination of portions of this week's films.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Each student must sign up for and must attend one hour of discussion in (relatively) small groups on Friday. Friday discussion groups will meet throughout the day on the hour, from 10 a.m. through 4 p.m., in Adams 202. Students will there have the opportunity of seeing portions of the films in detail and of airing their opinions for general consideration. Each students should sign up for a particular hour on Friday, and should continue attending at that same time throughout the semester.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Students will write six papers over the course of the semester. If you choose to write on a film (or films) shown in any given week, your paper will be considered due at 5:00 p.m. on the following Monday. Papers handed in after this must be considered late; and there's a chance they won't even be considered. Drop-off points for the papers: (1) in my mailbox at Horace Mann (N.B. There are two (2) Silvermans, "X" and "M"; I am "M" (Fritz Lang, 1931); (2) in the mailbox of Lissa McLaughlin, the course's graduate assistant; (3) in an envelope outside the door of Adams 201.

Assignment schedule: Assignment #1: Due either September 29 or October 6, depending on film(s) chosen.
#2: Due either October 13 or 20
#3: Due either October 27 or November 3
#4: Due either November 10 or 17
#5: Due either November 24 or December 8
#6: Due either December 15 or ~~22~~ January 12

N.B. Students are at all times themselves responsible for checking either with me or with Lissa McLaughlin, to make sure that they are caught up in assignments. Make-up assignments cannot be guaranteed, since films will have left the campus after they have been shown.

Further N.B. No student can go 3 (three) weeks without a written assignment. You cannot "do" the course by writing six papers all at once "from notes" at the end of the semester. This applies especiall to 8th semester students who "need this course for graduation."

Mechanics of the papers:

a. 3-4 double-spaced, typed pages
b. A summary of the film's plot is NOT wanted. Flights of fancy are welcomed, along with sprezzatura and baroque invention; a plurality of approaches (high serious, farberesque, I found it at the movies) is encouraged--just so long as you do not devote your energy to a summary of the content. Give evaluation, critique, analysis--but not recapitulation.

OVER

Mechanics of the papers (cont'd)

c. Although value judgments will inevitably be made, care should be taken not to generalize about the work of a director, an actor or a studio on the basis of one or two films, or on the basis of a single viewing. Since all the films have been judged to have sufficient interest to warrant our viewing them, I prefer you to put your talents to work toward the positive goal of discussing the film on its own terms, rather than your making some negative critique based on our own proclivities. A good rule of thumb: if you can't find something in the film that interests you (and it needn't be the film as a whole), don't write about the film at all.

TEXTS

Everyone should immediately buy: Andrew Bergman, We're in the Money
Andrew Sarris, The American Cinema: Directors and Directions

GRADE

The grade for this course will be made up from evaluation of (1) a student's written work over the entire range of the semester; and (2) his contribution to discussions. I reserve the right to give a final examination, but have not done so in similar courses in the past, and do not expect to do so this semester.

OFFICE HOURS

Generally 1:30-2:30 Wednesdays, 1-2 Thursdays. Additional hours for each month will be posted on the door of my office, Adams 206 (for example, this month's irregular hours include: 19 September, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; 30 September, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

In addition, please see Lissa McLaughlin for additional office hours, when you wish to discuss assignments.

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Please note: All screenings in List 120, Thursday evenings at 7:00 (dress optional)

September	25	DESIRE (Frank Borzage, 1936) DESTRY RIDES AGAIN (George Marshall, 1939)
October	2	Me and My Gal (Raoul Walsh, 1932) ~~Dante's Inferno (Harry Lachman, 1935)~~
October	9	Anna Karenina (Clarence Brown, 1935) Dinner at Eight (George Cukor, 1933)
October	16	G-Men (William Keighley, 1935) Heroes for Sale (William Wellman, 1933)
October	23	~~Steamboat Round the Bend (John Ford, 1935)~~ Judge Priest Camille (George Cukor, 1937)
October	30	A Farewell to Arms (Frank Borzage, 1932) Trouble in Paradise (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932)
November	6	Gold Diggers of 1933 (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933) Shall We Dance (Mark Sandrich, 1937)
November	13	The Scoundrel (Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht, 1935) His Girl Friday (Howard Hawks, 1940)
November	20	~~The Power and the Glory~~ (William K. Howard, 1933) 19 Gabriele over the Whitehouse Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (Frank Capra, 1939)
December	4	Public Enemy (William Wellman, 1931) Little Caesar (Mervyn LeRoy, 1930) The Roaring Twenties (Raoul Walsh, 1939)
December	11	Safe in Hell (William Wellman, 1931) Sylvia Scarlett (George Cukor, 1935)
~~December 18~~ JAN		The Dawn Patrol (Howard Hawks, 1930) The Dawn Patrol (Edmund Goulding, 1938) special selections ~~Hell's Angels (Whale, 1930)~~